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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Assistant Director for Operations

DATE: May 6, 1947

FROM : Acting Chief, FBIB

SUBJECT: Interview by Colonel L. K. White, Acting Chief, FBIB, with Mr. Lloyd Stratton, Assistant General Manager, Associated Press, New York, New York

Between 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m., May 2, 1947 Mr. Lloyd Stratton, Assistant General Manager, Associated Press, and Colonel L. K. White, Acting Chief, FBIB, conferred in the executive offices of the Associated Press, 50 Rockefeller Plaza, New York City, to discuss the monitoring of Associated Press dispatches, and their dissemination to government intelligence agencies in the interest of national intelligence. The discussion in brief follows:

The Associated Press furnishes three types of news service around the world. First is that news of world wide interest which is broadcast from London and San Francisco. Associated Press correspondents file to London and the United States only that information which they believe to be of world wide interest. Secondly, there is a regional service such as Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Far East, the Middle West of the United States, etc. Only a part of the information on which this service is based ever reaches the United States. Thirdly, there is a local service based on information of local interest. The greater part of this service is of no interest to anyone outside of the immediate area or particular country. Very little of the information furnished by this service ever reaches the United States.

It is primarily the local service and possibly the regional service to a lesser extent that FBIB is interested in monitoring.

Mr. Stratton declined to discuss at any length granting the CIG permission to monitor Associated Press dispatches and the dissemination of selected excerpts in the interest of national intelligence, on the grounds that the Board of Directors of the Associated Press had already considered such a proposal and that he was not in a position to do anything except carry out the wishes of the Board. It was definitely my impression that Mr. Stratton would not be inclined to grant such permission if he did have the authority. He explained that the Associated Press had built its reputation not only in the United States but in foreign countries on the principle of their right to furnish news service not connected with, or colored by, the administration of any government, and that this was a principle which they could not take any chance, however slight, on jeopardizing. Furthermore, he believed that his alternate proposal would serve our national intelligence far better than granting the specific permission which the CIG requested.

The alternative proposed by the Associated Press is for the CIG, or a representative of the State, War, or Navy Departments, to subscribe to the above

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mentioned local service in all the areas in which we are interested. Practically every bit of information filed by a correspondent, and none of it is filed by radio, is included in this service. That part which is broadcast by the Associated Press is only a portion of the total service furnished to local subscribers. Mr. Stratton states that this service is available all over the world to anyone who wants to subscribe, and for more than a year has been subscribed to in many areas by either the War, Navy or State Departments, primarily the latter. Mr. Stratton further stated that he knew of many instances in which a subscriber had furnished information to the States long before it was ever printed in any newspaper.

As a result of this conference the following conclusions were drawn:

1. That the Associated Press is not justified in denying the CIG permission to monitor and disseminate only a portion of a service which it is perfectly willing for the CIG to get as a subscriber in the same manner in which it is furnished to all other subscribers that can do whatever they please with the material received.
2. That it is useless to make further attempts to obtain official permission to intercept Associated Press broadcasts or to disseminate selected excerpts to national intelligence agencies.
3. That the alternate proposal of the Associated Press would for many obvious reasons be impossible for the FBIB to implement.

While beyond the scope of my mission the following recommendations are made:

1. That the Director, CIG, make every effort to insure that either the War Department, Navy Department, State Department, or the CIG subscribes to the local Associated Press service wherever available in all the areas of the world in which the CIG is particularly interested.
2. That, if and when, the Director, CIG, is satisfied that this service is being subscribed to by the appropriate agencies in the areas of interest, and is being properly exploited, FBIB discontinue the monitoring of Associated Press broadcasts.

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D. K. WHITE
Acting Chief, FBIB

OO/FB

cc: Mr. L. Houston

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